EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS GUIDEBOOK

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DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

INTRODUCTION

The Developmental Screening Guidebook is designed as a reference guide on how to best support healthy growth and development of children in your care throughout key developmental intervals and identify children who may benefit from specialized support. Early childhood program staff, service providers, health care systems, families, and communities all play important roles in providing support and services to young children during this critical developmental period. The resources within this guide are intended to help program staff deepen their understanding of how children develop, regardless of their individual needs, and establish a comprehensive early identification system.

WHY IS EARLY IDENTIFICATION SO IMPORTANT?

Children grow and develop at different rates and it's important to know when additional support and interventions may be necessary. Early Identification leads to early intervention, which improves student achievement. Children who receive early and appropriate support are less likely to experience persistent academic difficulties.

Learn the Signs. Act Early. (LTSAE) is a federally mandated initiative to support tracking developmental milestones and acting early if there is a concern. **The CDC outlines the following benefits of early intervention:**

- Early intervention is likely to be more effective when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.
- Early intervention services can change a child's developmental path and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.
- Families benefit from early intervention by being able to better meet their children's needs from an early age and throughout their lives.

The following steps are intended to provide a framework for developing an early identification system so that children are receiving the necessary support to achieve academic success in typical early childhood environments.

- Step 1: Understand How Children Develop
- Step 2: Encourage Development Through Daily Routines and Activities
- Step 3: Establish a Developmental Screening, Intervention, and Referral Process
- Step 4: Support Families in Children's Developmental Progress

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND HOW CHILDREN DEVELOP

There is a wide range of normally developing behaviors and skills in young children, known as developmental "milestones". These milestones serve as markers for when behaviors and skills typically emerge. While not all children will reach developmental milestones at the same time, it's important to understand the critical milestones that children are expected to achieve.

Educators and Providers embed training opportunities and resources that support the daily reference of developmental progression.

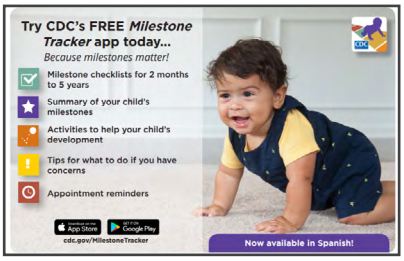
- The Louisiana's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) are designed as a continuum to help early childhood educators look across age levels and learning domains to see how children's development emerges and progresses over time. The goal is to learn what developmental steps the child is taking now, and to meet the individual needs of that child on a daily basis. Educators should use the ELDS as a daily reference and resource.
- Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns is a free online training course that provides tools and best practices for monitoring children's development which uses the Learn the Signs. Act Early. materials from the CDC.

Families learn more about their child's development at each stage of life.

- The LTSAE Milestones in Action provide a free library of pictures and videos of developmental milestones for children of all ages for families to reference.
- The ABCs of Development provide an easy-to-follow developmental map for families in the areas of physical development, social and emotional development, thinking skills, and communication skills.

Community Entities work in partnership to ensure support is provided to the field.

- Lead Agencies and CCR&R's can support their communities by distributing flyers that support understanding developmental milestones.
- LDOE and LDH are collaborating to co-brand the suite of resources offered through Learn the Signs. Act Early. For more information regarding obtaining free co-branded materials, reach out to earlychildhood@la.gov.



STEP 2: ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DAILY ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES

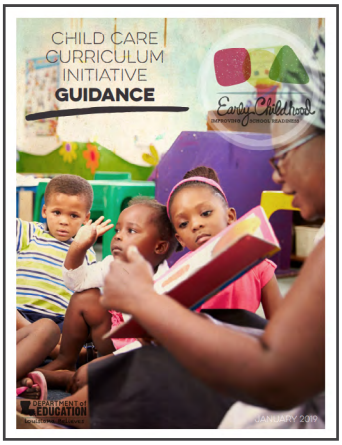
Healthy development is supported when children are exposed to opportunities and experiences where their physical, social/emotional and educational needs are met. When teachers and caregivers understand the expectations for development, as outlined in the Louisiana's Early Learning Development Standards, they can use that information in planning for routines and activities. Developmental monitoring describes the ways in which practitioners can observe how children develop over time and whether a child meets the typical developmental milestones in a variety of domains including social/emotional, gross motor, fine motor, language, and cognition.

Promoting children's development requires intentional planning and consistent monitoring. When planning activities, consider practices that create opportunities to strengthen and develop supportive relationships. Quality programs take responsibility for providing high-quality interactions and instruction to all children, including those whose development may be delayed, have an identified disability, or whose home language is not English. Staff members in these programs are committed to providing inclusive settings where children are educated and cared for alongside their typically developing peers.

Educators and Providers participate in consistent quality training on the subjects that matter the most for supporting child development.

Educators and Providers monitor children's development through *Teaching Strategies GOLD®* to identify learning and developmental lags and gaps in order to provide appropriate interventions and make decisions on whether or not a child may be in need of additional support.

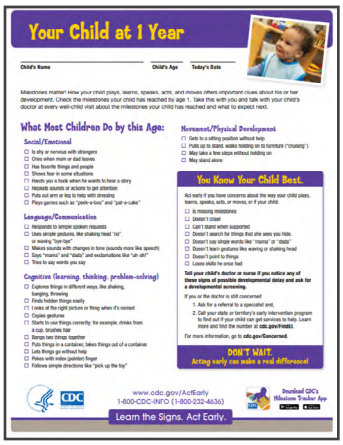
- The Child Care Curriculum Initiative Guidance is intended to support programs in choosing curricula appropriate for children age birth to five. Through a rigorous evaluation process, the LDOE has identified and ranked curricula based criteria including alignment to the Birth to Five Standards, quality and complexity of learning activities, and potential for individualizing instruction. The LDOE strongly encourages the implementation of the highest tiered curriculum.
- Teaching Strategies GOLD® Objectives for Development and Learning uses a color band system to show which skills and behaviors are typical for children of a particular age. The bands help manage the complexity and ongoing changes of young children's development.
- Louisiana's Early Childhood Key Training Modules are a set of accessible, high-quality trainings designed by experts on best practices in the field of early childhood. Early Childhood programs are encouraged to contact their local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) for course offerings. The following courses are recommended:



- Standards-Based Approach is designed to increase the knowledge of the theories and basic principles of child development and learning and support program staff in connecting classroom practices to early learning development standards.
- Connecting the Pieces: Using Standards for Infants & Toddlers supports designing instructional and learning outcomes for infants and toddlers by aligning standards, curriculum, and assessment.
- Using Assessment to Support Learning and Development provides practitioners with resources to identify the characteristics of useful, significant, and informative documentation of children's development and learning and ways to use assessment data to plan meaningful learning experiences.
- Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence can support educators and providers in making strong connections between traumatic life events and the manifestation of behaviors as a result.

Families continuously monitor children's development and take action when there is a concern.

- The LTSAE Milestone Checklists make developmental monitoring practical and easy for families to monitor children's development at every stage, and act early when there is a concern.


Your Child at 1 Year

Child's Name | Child's Age | Today's Date

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 1. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional
- Is shy or nervous with strangers
- Cries when mom or dad leaves
- Has favorite things and people
- Shows fear in some situations
- Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story
- Repeats sounds or actions to get attention
- Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing
- Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"

Language/Communication
- Responds to simple spoken requests
- Uses simple gestures, like shaking head "no" or waving "bye-bye"
- Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)
- Says "mama" and "dada" and exclamations like "uh-oh!"
- Tries to say words you say

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)
- Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing
- Finds hidden things easily
- Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named
- Copies gestures
- Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair
- Bangs two things together
- Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container
- Lets things go without help
- Pokes with index (pointer) finger
- Follows simple directions like "pick up the toy"

Movement/Physical Development
- Gets to a sitting position without help
- Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture ("cruising")
- May take a few steps without holding on
- May stand alone

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:
- Is missing milestones
- Doesn't crawl
- Can't stand when supported
- Doesn't search for things that she sees you hide.
- Doesn't say single words like "mama" or "dada"
- Doesn't learn gestures like waving or shaking head
- Doesn't point to things
- Loses skills he once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned:
1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/ncbddd.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON'T WAIT.
Acting early can make a real difference!

www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Download CDC's Milestone Tracker App

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Community Entities work in partnership to ensure support is provided to the field.

- Lead Agencies and CCR&R's can support their communities by integrating the LTSAE Milestone Moment Booklets into early care and education centers during enrollment events and family engagement opportunities. Examples include:
  - sending home in backpacks;
  - sharing at open house events;
  - use during parent/teacher meetings; and
  - make available at family fun nights.

Milestone Moments

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

www.cdc.gov/milestones
1-800-CDC-INFO

Adapted from CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD: BIRTH TO AGE 5, Fifth Edition, edited by Steven Shelov and Tanya Remer Altmann © 1991, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and BRIGHT FUTURES: GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH SUPERVISION OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Hagan, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Duncan, 2008, Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.

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You can follow your child's development by watching how he or she plays, learns, speaks, and acts.

Look inside for milestones to watch for in your child and how you can help your child learn and grow.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/milestones
1-800-232-4636

STEP 3: ESTABLISH A DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING, INTERVENTION, AND REFERRAL PROCESS

The ongoing development of our youngest population is critical for ensuring academic success and improving outcomes. Exposure to enriching learning experiences can have a positive influence on a child's developmental progress. Adversely, environmental factors including traumatic events can have a negative impact; however, supportive relationships with caring and competent educators and providers can help mitigate the impacts of traumatic events.

Developmental screenings can be used to help determine if a child's learning and development is on track based on important areas of development including language, motor, cognitive, and social/emotional domains. **Results from developmental screeners can inform children's strengths and identify specific areas where more support might be considered.**

A screening is typically conducted through a research-based questionnaire in collaboration with families and caregivers. Every child should be screened at the appropriate entry point using a high-quality screener and use the data to inform instruction and interventions.

All children in Louisiana should receive periodic, developmentally appropriate, and comprehensive screenings:

a. as part of well-child visits to their pediatrician;

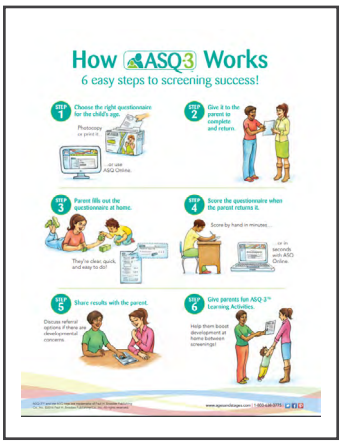
b. in response to parental concerns; or

c. in response to a triggering event such as hospitalization, trauma, or sudden onset of behavior that concerns

d. the family, caregiver, or teacher.

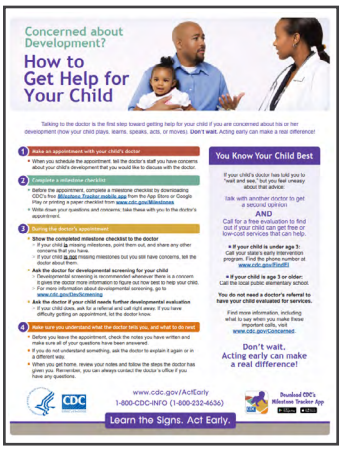
Educators and Providers receive training to implement a diagnostic screener at key entry and transition points.

- Screening tools, such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaires® are often used to detect delays in development. Comprehensive screenings include screening for physical health, oral health, mental health, and developmental and psychosocial needs, and provide important information to caregivers and families on children's developmental progress.
- The resources in Appendix A outline a spectrum of screenings and the periods in a young child's life in which they should occur.
- Appendix B outlines a screening, intervention, and referral flow chart for early childhood programs to use as a reference for developing an early identification system.



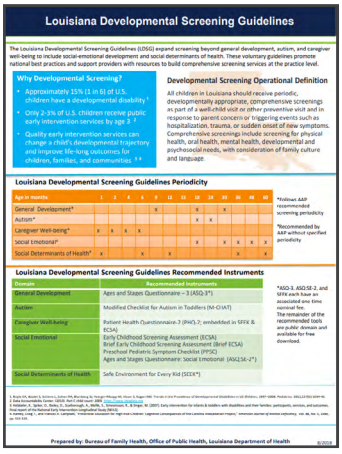
Families collaborate with educators to complete diagnostic screeners periodically and inform practitioners and pediatricians when there are concerns.

- LTSAE How to Get Help for Your Child is a tip sheet to support families in developing a plan to address concerns regarding their child's development.



Community Entities work in partnership to ensure support is provided to the field.

- Lead Agencies and CCR&R's can reference LDH's Developmental Screening Resources and Tools for Providers in order to support families and providers in every region of the state find resources in their communities including general and social/emotional development, autism, and family wellness.
- The Tulane Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation provides support services for Type III centers in areas such as:
  - child behavior and social emotional issues;
  - teacher, director, and parent support;
  - classroom issues;
  - general stress and coping, and;
  - other concerns related to caring for young children.



INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

Child Find is a federal mandate included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that requires the identification, location and evaluation of all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. Child Find requirements include Part C (Early Intervention for infants and toddlers) and Part B (Early Childhood Special Education Services, ECSE, for children ages 3 through 5). Additional information regarding the transition from Part C to Part B services can be found in Louisiana's Early Childhood Transition Process. A brief summary of information is below.

EarlySteps (Part C) provides services to families with infants and toddlers **aged birth to three years (36 months)** who have a medical condition likely to result in a developmental delay, or who have developmental delays.	School Systems provide services to families with children **ages three to five (Part B)** and may be eligible to receive special education services.
› Children with delays in cognitive, motor, vision, hearing, communication, social-emotional, or adaptive development may be eligible for services. EarlySteps services are designed to improve the family's capacity to enhance their child's development. These services are provided in the child's natural environment, such as the child's home, child care, or any other community setting typical for children aged birth to 3 years (36 months). › Family members and practitioners can contact Early Steps System Point of Entry (SPOE) to make referrals.	› A qualified team of professionals, along with family members, will make the determination. Through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), districts will receive a funding allocation based on the number of IDEA eligible children served. › While interventions are not required for a preschool-aged child, a student suspected of being gifted or talented, or a student suspected of having a severe or low incidence impairment, Bulletin 1508 can support Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in understanding ChildFind and Pupil Appraisal services in addition to intervention, screening, and referral processes. It is recommended that an early childhood School Building Level Committee is formed to determine appropriate next steps for each individual child when concerns may arise.

The following recommendations are intended for programs to encourage healthy screening and effective transitions for children from Part C to Part B. Early Steps, Lead Agency networks and school systems should:

- prioritize attending monthly meetings;
- utilize coordinated enrollment events to conduct screenings and collect updates for immunizations;
- develop and implement workshops for health screenings where Part C and Part B staff can attend; and
- create and administer family outreach surveys to communicate the screening process and gauge the level of comfort.

STEP 4: SUPPORT FAMILIES IN CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS

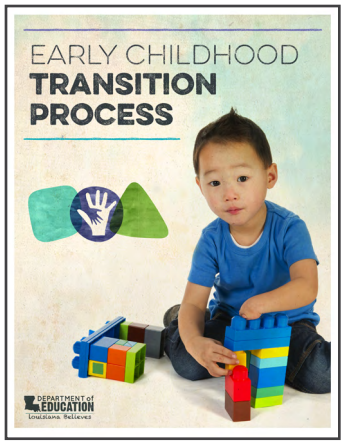
Children's development is best supported when adults who care for them work as a team. It is important that lines of communication among all members of the team are open and on-going in order to share information on how a child is progressing, whether or not there are concerns, and how those concerns should be addressed.

Educators and Providers develop a communication system for ongoing communication with families and caregivers and address concerns in a collaborative approach.

- Appendix C outlines strategies for communicating children's developmental progress with families.
- Appendix D outlines strategies for communicating concerns about a child's development with families.

Families know their rights to ensure what is best for their child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

- Families can reference the Early Childhood Transition Process as a guide to prepare for smooth and effective transitions for children who have been identified with a disability.
- How to Talk With the Doctor supports the development of questions and information that families may want to share with a pediatrician.



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- Lead Agencies and CCR&R's reference the Community Outreach Specialists directory to support early childhood program staff and families with their statewide parent consultant/COS coordinator.

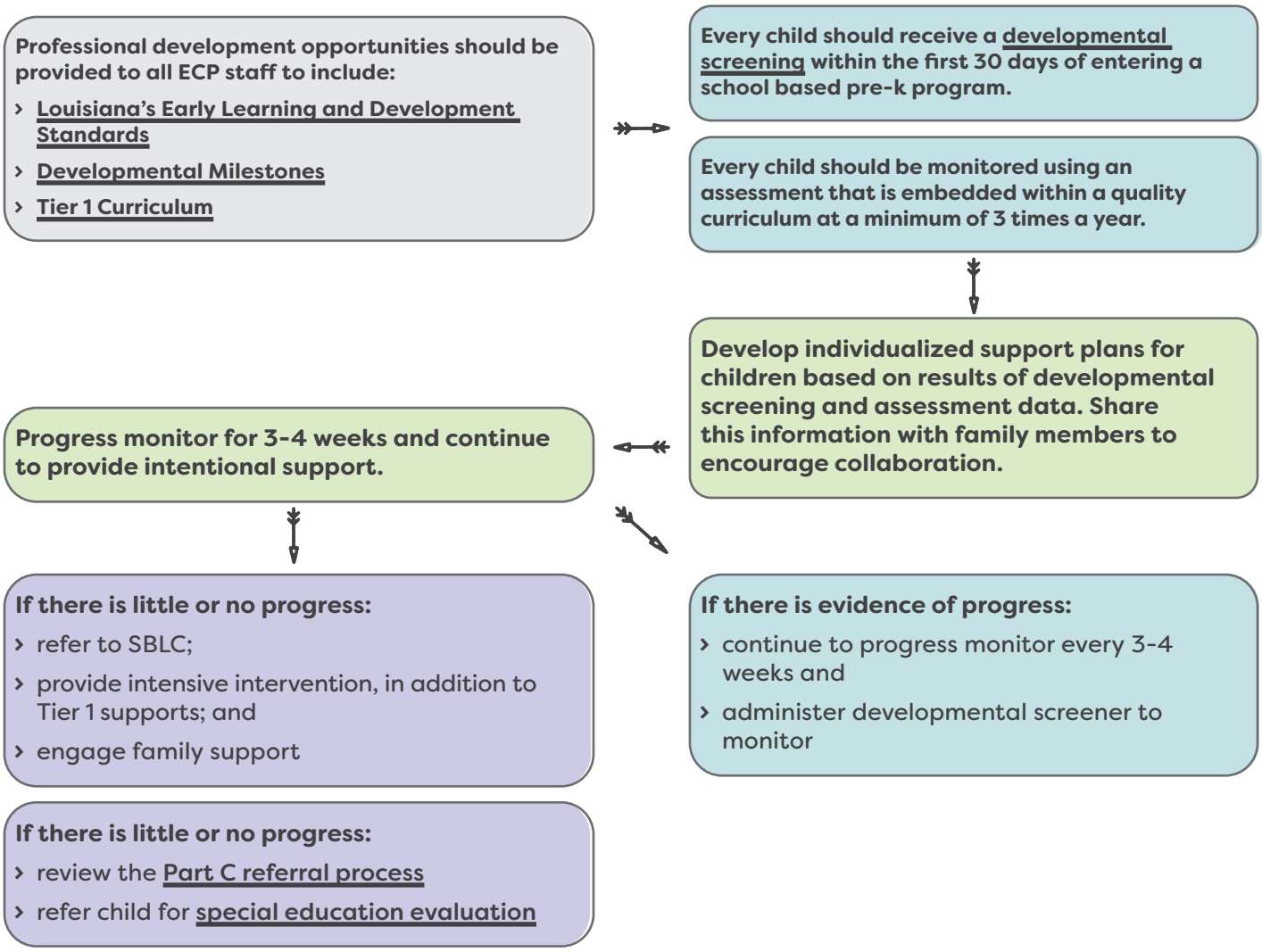
APPENDIX A: SCREENING GUIDELINES

The Louisiana Developmental Screening Guidelines (LDSG) expand screening beyond general development, autism, and caregiver well-being to include social-emotional development and social determinants of health. These voluntary guidelines promote national best practices and support providers with resources to build comprehensive screening services at the practice level.

The Recommendations for Preventative Pediatric Health Care represent a consensus by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Bright Futures and are designed for the care of children who are receiving competent parenting, have no manifestations of any important health problems, and are growing and developing in a satisfactory fashion. The recommendations in this statement do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate.

APPENDIX B: SCREENING, INTERVENTION, AND REFERRAL FLOW CHART FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

According to Title 28, Part CI. Bulletin 1508 - Pupil Appraisal Handbook, an immediate referral may be made to pupil appraisal services for an individual evaluation of those students suspected of having low incidence impairments such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, deaf-blindness, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disability (moderate or severe), multiple disabilities, and some students with severe autism, orthopedic impairments and/or significant health issues; or based on substantial documentation by school building level personnel of any student suspected of being likely to injure him/herself or others. Screening activities should be completed during the evaluation for these students.



APPENDIX C: COMMUNICATING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS WITH FAMILIES

Programs should develop strategies for communicating children's developmental progress with families or caregivers on a routine basis.

- Develop opportunities for ongoing discussions about children's development and developmental milestones. Consider including pertinent information in the programs Handbook or Guide.
- Develop a schedule of ongoing opportunities to share individual children's developmental progress (i.e. parent/teacher conferences and family nights).
- Routinely share activities that can support children's learning and development (i.e. sending home family engagement activities from Teaching Strategies GOLD® that are specific to child's developmental progress).
- Encourage families to work with pediatricians or other health providers to administer screenings and communicate with programs.
- Routinely celebrate with families when a child meets important milestones which will help them become more aware of how their child is progressing and encourage them to share what they are seeing at home with the program staff.

APPENDIX D: COMMUNICATING CONCERNS WITH FAMILIES

Programs should develop strategies for communicating concerns about a child's development.

- Choose a time and place where you can talk with families without being interrupted and ensure ample time is available for conversations and questions from the family.
- Work with staff to ensure adequate evidence and documentation is available to share.
- Start with positives - share what the child is doing well and what accomplishments he/she has achieved.
- Be prepared for strong emotions since families may or may not sense there is a problem.
- Share concerns based on objective evidence or documentation that has been collected during the daily routines and activities of the program; share concerns based on the developmental milestones of what is expected for a child of that age.
- Pose thoughtful questions to families to share observations at home related to the evidence and documentation provided. Be mindful of observations that may differ from documentation being provided. Consider ways to facilitate a productive conversation to identify next steps that the family feels comfortable with.
- Take the time to share resources and support and the process for additional screening and making referrals.
- Remind the family that their concerns are not based on a diagnosis or evaluation and that they may want to schedule an appointment with their pediatrician or family physician for further screening.